

## Final Thoughts After 10 Years as Editor-in-Chief

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After 10 years as Editor-in-Chief (EiC) of *JAOCS*, it's bittersweet for me to be turning this job over to the new EiC, Jim Kenar. There have been so many great things over the past 10 years that it's hard to summarize them all, but there have also been challenges.

When I started in 2006, AOCs was just entering into an agreement with Springer and although the upside was quite enticing, no one knew what would come of it. Those first few years were spent sorting out all the new issues that came with entering the modern publishing era, moving away from manuscripts mailed all over the world in blue bags to an on-line submission and review process. Although there were some growing pains, in hindsight it was quite a blessing that we partnered with Springer. I shudder to think of where we would be now without the benefits they've brought to us.

I've also enjoyed working with an exceptionally wonderful and dedicated group of people—they have made my job as EiC a lot easier. Thanks go to all the AOCs staff who assist with the journal. But I want to call out Pam Landman in particular, who keeps all three AOCs journals on track—thanks Pam. Thanks also to the various Senior Associate Editors that have helped over the past 10 years; I know full well that you all have the most important responsibility to maintain the quality of our journal. Thanks to all the Associate Editors who do all the hard work of finding reviewers and overseeing the peer review process. Finally, thanks to all of you who have reviewed manuscripts for *JAOCS*—without you, the peer review process doesn't work.

But it hasn't been all roses either. We've gone through an unprecedented period of growth in the past 10 years. We've grown from an annual submission rate of about 250 to over 600 last year, with our rejection rate also growing from 25 to 65 %. We now reject 2 out of 3 manuscripts that are submitted! And we do that without more editorial staff, meaning there has been a huge strain on the system in the past few years. This will be one of Jim's first tasks, spreading the workload out a bit more.

One of the struggles we've faced over my tenure, and indeed well before I became EiC, is making sure that the quality of the papers we publish is absolutely the best. With the increased burden for each AE and SAE, there is less time to spend on each and every manuscript. Despite this, I have continually worked towards improving the quality of the papers we publish. Quality indicators like Impact Factor (IF) are often considered markers of quality and success, although they are not the only consideration. Fortunately, our IF has generally increased during my tenure to a respectable 1.5–1.6 (1.86 for 5-year IF). Although we serve a professional society with specific interests, we seek to publish high quality scientific papers with an appeal that goes well beyond AOCs.

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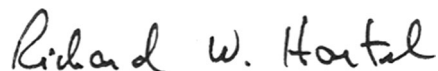
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Could we do better? Of course. It's something I've pushed from the start, that the quality of our journal comes down to the quality of the papers that make it through our peer review process. Again, the system has become overburdened, so unfortunately, we periodically receive Letters to the Editor suggesting that we have let things through that don't make the grade. Although one could say that is inevitable for a program run completely by volunteers, that doesn't mean we shouldn't be doing everything in our powers to improve the process and ensure that we publish only high quality articles.

After 10 years, I leave the journal in the capable hands of Jim Kenar. Jim has been a Senior Associate Editor for

nearly my whole tenure. I trust that Jim's energy and creativity, while still maintaining attention to detail, will take the journal to new heights. I wish him the best for the future and hope that you all give him the support he needs to continue the success of *JAACS*.



Richard W. Hartel

Editor-in-Chief

*Journal of the American Oil Chemists' Society*